

Daily Meditation 12-02-22

Winter, Advent and Honoring the Dark

Good morning.

In today's meditation we are considering the darkness of winter, darkness of the season, for those of us who live in the northern hemisphere of course.

And the darkness of Advent, and Meister Eckhart's profound observation that "the ground of the soul is dark." The depths of everything are dark, the depths of the sky, the depths of the sea, the depths of the earth, though if you go down far enough you're also find fire, of course.

How this meditation on darkness and this coming of the darkness of winter speaks to our souls in a deep way. The apophatic divinity, the god of darkness, is closer, you might say. As Thomas Aquinas says,

Then alone do we know God truly, when we believe that God is far beyond all that we can possibly think of God.

So divinity is greater than our thoughts, greater than our concepts, greater than our projections. Greater than our prayers!

A Zen poem goes like this:

You cannot get it by taking thought. You cannot seek it by not taking thought.

There is a mystery between thought and no thought, and between silence and word, between light and dark, between God and Godhead therefore.

Thomas Merton's poem rings true: "O silence" --

*O silence, golden zero
Unsetting sun
Love winter when the plant says nothing.*

So the plants and the trees have been stripped of their leaves, so they're not talking very much, but their roots are being nurtured. Go deeper. "O silence, golden zero." Something golden is happening at this place of nothingness and silence and wintering and hibernating. Like Merton says,

*Be still.
Listen to the stones of the wall.
Be silent, they try
to speak your
name.*

*Listen
to the living walls.
Who are you?
Who
are you? Whose
silence are you?*

So we are known in silence. There's a special you that is found in the depths of silence, and winter, and darkness.

Like Rainer Maria Rilke says,

Yet no matter how deeply I go down into myself, my God is dark, and like a webbing made of a hundred roots that drink in silence.

So God is a dark god, and an apophatic divinity.

We find in Meister Eckhart, because Advent is a time for listening,

This word is a hidden word and comes in the darkness of the night. To enter this darkness, put away all voices and sounds, and all images and likenesses, for no image has ever reached to the soul's foundation, where God herself, with her own being, is effective.

So the journey into the dark is a journey into depth. And not only our own, but that of divinity that dwells deeply within us.

All these teachings are found in my book, *Original Blessing*, Chapter 11, which is the first chapter of the Via Negativa: "Emptying, Letting Go of Images, Letting Silence Be Silence."

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.